

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Lisa Bergmann. I live at 49 Livingston Street in New Haven CT.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

Undocumented young people are some of the most courageous yet vulnerable members of our community. Many risked their lives to escape from violence in their countries of origin. Since they cannot access Husky coverage once they are in the US, and for fear of being deported, usually their medical conditions go untreated until they are very sick or until it is simply too late to treat the conditions.

I work in the health care field, supporting unionized food service workers in Connecticut in accessing health benefits. Many of these workers are undocumented. They are paying the same amount in taxes as their co-workers who were born in this country, however they are unable to access state health programs such as Husky. During the pandemic, nearly all of the workers I support in my job were laid off. I was able to support some workers in transitioning to Husky when they lost their jobs. However, the undocumented workers could not qualify for Husky and were left with no insurance once their employer stopped paying for their coverage. In these cases, I searched for free clinics for these members, but many free clinics are open only for limited hours and do not have specialized care that is needed for common chronic conditions such as diabetes and cancer. Some of these members ended up in the hospital soon after their coverage ended due to lack of access to their medication or other routine care.

Beyond the unionized workforce, our undocumented community is usually doing the hardest jobs that include the fewest employer-paid benefits. This is the community that needs Husky the most. If our undocumented neighbors lack access to care for COVID, STI's, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, etc, our whole community is at higher risk for these illnesses.

If SB 284 is passed, it would make our entire state safer for everyone.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all community members in CT regardless of age or status.

Thank you for your time,
Lisa Bergmann
49 Livingston Street
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Sent from my iPhone